**Attending via GoToMeeting:** Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Melanie Bubar (Homeless Services of Aroostook), Norm Maze (Shalom House), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voice), Kate Easter (MCEDV), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Alice Preble (DHHS), Sarah Wade (DHHS), Bridgette Semler (YAB), Erin Kelly (Preble Street), Tracy Allen (KBH), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Boyd Kronholm (Bangor Area Homeless Shelter), Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Rotta Knott (Tedford Housing), Meredith Smith (CHCS), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Stephanie Primm (Knox County), Katie Spencer White (MMHS), Rachel Prentiss (Preble Street), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Donna Kelley (WCAP), Kenneth Capron (RR), Marcie Dean (Next Step), Kelsea Vincent (YAB), Aaron Geyer (City of Portland), Ginny Dill, (DHHS), Allie Lovejoy (Preble Street), Susan Randall (Homeless Advocacy for All), Rebecca Hobbs (Through These Doors), Rebekah Paredes (New Hope for Women), Molly Sirios (BOL), Mary Wade (MaineHousing), Mike Shaughnessy (MaineHousing), Amanda Goss (Partners for Peace), Wes Phiney (YCSPI), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Josh D’Alessio (PPCHC), Abigail Smallwood (City of Biddeford), Kari Bradstreet (FVP), Gerald Botta (Home Inc.), Julie Davidson (Caring Unlimited), Dan Hodgkins (Preble Street), Kat Freeman (Home Fires Consulting) and Brian Bouthot VOA).

Stephonie Gregg (YCSPI) and Kari Bradstreet (FVP).

[Reminder – If you call in, please email blabua@mainehousing.org to let us know you were there!]

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Disclaimer: These notes are not intended to represent direct quotes, things may not be in chronological order, and ideas may not always be accurately attributed. If you have corrections or comments, please email blabua@mainehousing.org to let Betty know and she will edit accordingly.

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Meeting Minutes: Maine CoC**

**Date: March 18, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Location: Ring Central**

1. **Member Introductions:**

Awa welcomed all in attendance.

1. **Review & Approval of Minutes:**

MCOC Minutes from the February meeting were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

***Mike made a motion to approve February’s minutes, Bill seconded. . No discussion. No objections. Passed unanimously.***

1. **Big Thinking Topic:**

**COVID 19 Continued Discussion:** Awa opened the discussion by complimenting all providers for their dedication and team work benefiting clients throughout the pandemic. The following points were shared:

* During the last year providers displayed the ability to work successfully, often over several sites to add services, provide provisions, provide case management, obtain PPE and utilize hotels.
* Clients are confused on how to get the vaccine.
* A major vaccine barrier continues to be the fear of being inoculated.
* Remote working has both increased meeting participation and connections with others.
* Pandemic showed the necessity of redesigning the current shelter structure.
* Katie will draft a qualitative survey to capture data on lessons learned to assist with future organizational planning.
1. **Wellsky COVID Vaccine Assessment Discussion:**

Mary showed the guidelines for collecting and sharing vaccine information. A conversation evaluated both the pros and cons of collecting the data by considering the following points:

* If there isn’t a need for specific data it shouldn’t be collected.
* Data will capture populations of people still needing vaccinations so that no one will be left behind.
* Fear shelter seekers not vaccinated will be denied services.
* The assumption vaccinated people will be prioritized.
* Both directly and indirectly discriminates.
* Families have children not vaccinated.
* With a population afraid to take vaccines, it’s not a fair question during intake.
* Could the question be asked at time of exit after trust is gained? Yes, it can be asked during at any point.
* Not all clients complete an exit interview.

General consensus was reached to table the decision to collect or not collect vaccine data until a future date.

1. **NOFA:** The NOFA Committee will begin meeting again next month. Anyone interested in joining the committee are welcome. Due to Conflict of Interest, Vickey reminded folks, a member of the committee cannot be part of an agency receiving NOFA funding. Scott reminded all that Lynn Morrow, from HUD, will be reaching out directly to recipients for required documentation relating to grant agreements and for all to have updated information pertaining to match funding in order to expedite the process.
2. **Legislative Updates:**
* **Federal:** Cullen started the Federal synopsis by bringing attention to **American Rescue Plan Act, HR 1319,** a $1.9 trillion COVID relief bill passed by the House on 2/27. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration, where it is expected to be amended, then sent back to the House for approval.As passed by the House, the bill provides: additional direct $1,400 stimulus payments to individuals and households making up to $75,000 per year, $25 billion in rental assistance, $5 billion for homelessness assistance through the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, $9.96 billion for homeowner assistance, $100 million for housing counseling and two key tax credit provisions that would provide significant help to vulnerable populations. Additionally, Cullen highlighted the **Emergency Family Stabilization Act.** This bill would provide flexible funding during the COVID-19 pandemic to support community-based organizations already serving unaccompanied homeless youth, with a focus on meeting the needs of unsheltered youth, youth sharing housing due to deep poverty, pregnant and parenting youth, and youth experiencing domestic violence and human trafficking.
* **State:** Cullen announced there are currently 30 Legislatures supporting 49 pieces of Legislation addressing the needs of homelessness and are listed in this month’s legislative packet which was posted on the Maine Homeless planning website and mailed to all contacts on the SHC. Cullen noted, **LR 1651 An Act to Authorize Shelters That Serve Women to Refuse Access to Persons Who Are Transgender,** is a piece of Legislation not supported by the Maine Homeless Policy Committee.
1. **SHC Updates:**

Stephanie updated the committee by highlighting the key topics addressed during March’s Council meeting. 2 hours were dedicated to a CSH update on the System Redesign with a deep dive into data pinpointing the current needs of homelessness in the state of Maine. Work on the System Redesign will proceed over the next couple of months with a focus on structuring the service hubs and the budget process. Stephanie invited all to look at the CSH postings on the Maine Homeless Planning website. The council also discussed how best to continue supporting each other through COVID and barriers to vaccine distribution.

1. **Long Term Stayers:**

Cullen reported the Portland area LTS group has successfully placed a total of 311 people with a success rate of 94%. The Brunswick area recently placed 33 households. No report from the Bangor area.

1. **COC Board Update:**
* **Coordinated Entry Committee-** Mike gave the committee update. TAC meetings continue. A denial policy has been adopted moving the committee’s work forward out of the referral phase and into the assessment phase. The CES Chairs will continue to meet with CSH to collaborate on the system redesign to ensure everyone is on the same page.
1. **Youth Action Board Update:**  On behalf of YAB, Bridgette presented the Board update. The Bidder’s Conference was held on March 4, 2021 with several of YAB in attendance. Once the deadline for RFP submissions has passed, YAB members will be crucial participants in the YHDP scoring process. Many YAB members attended the Youth Inclusivity Training byDee Balliet of True Colors United on March 12, 2021.
2. **Standing Committee Updates:**
* **NOFA-** Did not meet. Will meet next month.
* **Resource Committee-** Norm reported 50 people attended the Youth Inclusivity Training. A recording of the presentation has been posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website. The committee has endorsed a list of recommendations for next year’s PIT count.
* **Data Committee:** Mary announced the HMIS team will be hosting virtual training sessions in May. Mary requested for providers to remind HMIS users the importance of completing all the fields noting zip codes will now only be asked once.
1. **Next Meeting Agenda:**
* Big thinking topic: Continued Discussion – COVID-19 One Year Later: Lessons learned throughout the pandemic, strengths discovered, and what we can carry forward to the Continuum post-pandemic
* All were invited to email Betty, Scott or chairs agenda suggestions.

**Next MCOC meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2021 from 1:00-3:00 pm**